

Is My Cat Diabetic?

CatChannel veterinary expert Arnold Plotnick, DVM, describes some signs of diabetes.

By Arnold Plotnick, DVM

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Q: My veterinarian believes my cat has diabetes. I need to know for sure because my fear is that he doesn't, and that he'll die from the medication he's being given.

My cat will be 10 years old in August. Last December, when I took him to the veterinarian, he did some tests and found that my cat's glucose level was 380. My cat went back a week later, and his glucose level was 411. He doesn't show any signs of diabetes. He was fine before, and he seems fine now. His life has been stressful because of some recent moves, and I am afraid he has been misdiagnosed with diabetes. But I'm not a veterinarian, and I don't want to make the wrong decision.

A: Blood glucose levels of 380 and 411 are highly suspicious for diabetes. Stress can cause high blood sugar, but most cases of stress hyperglycemia do not result in readings this high. An easy way to confirm the diagnosis is to check the cat's urine for glucose. If the cat has lots of sugar in the urine, he is almost certainly diabetic. Another way to confirm whether the cat has diabetes is to have your veterinarian run a fructosamine test, which essentially tells you what the cat's average blood sugar has been over the past two weeks. If the fructosamine level is elevated, then the cat is very likely diabetic. Your classic diabetic is an 8- to 10-year-old male, and your cat fits that bill to a T. I'd have to agree with your veterinarian: I think your cat is diabetic.